244 753 824 pumpkins, another will go to the field and plant some seeds in it without the old man's knowledge ; then people will venture to plant in their own gardens. Transgression of this taboo is said to be punished by lumbago.

222 824 828 There are, besides, many wild plants which the housewives collect and of which they make excellent dishes : the *tjeke*, a kind of Chenopodiacea, which is also used as a medicine to induce forgetfulness ; the *nkakana*, a pretty plant of the Cucurbitaceae family, which climbs up the dried stems of maize after the harvest, and of which they eat the leaves and also the pretty little oval pointed fruit.

137 285 *Tomatoes* (shimati) are also found growing round the villages, where they propagate themselves, and seem to prosper the better the less they are cared for : the Natives take them to Lourenço Marques for sale in very original baskets made of a single palm leaf, with the follicles artistically twisted. I am unable to say when they were introduced. There is a agreeable kind of small tomato which grows wild in Khosen, about the size of a cherry.

244 Natives also cultivate a kind of *onion* (nyala, yi-tin), smaller than the European varieties, which they very much appreciate in their sauces.

249 *The sugar cane* (moba, mu-mi) is never grown in large plantations, but you find it on the Coast, as well as in Zoutpansberg, cultivated on a small scale, either for eating, or for preparing the strong *shiwayawaya* drink, which I shall describe later on.

245 The *pine-apple* (lalasi, dji-ma) has spread as far as the Bilene country and must be of ancient date ; it differs considerably from the Natal pine-apple, being longer, coarser and not so sweet. In many villages large plantations are to be seen.

249 *Tobacco* (fole, dji-ma) is also wide-spread and seems to have been cultivated for a long time. A curious fact is that its cultivation is the business of the men, and women have nothing to do with it. Amongst the Ba-Ronga it is sown first in a damp spot in the marsh, in a special little garden called *shibibi*, and, when it has grown a little, is planted out (simeka) on the hill, near the villages. When nearly ripe the lower leaves are first

cut, dried and ground "ku djinga," as a foretaste! Then the other leaves are cut, covered with nkuhlu foliage and left for three days to mature (ku pfundja) ; a string is then passed through them and they are hung to a tree to dry. Before they have become brittle, they are rolled up together so as to form the "mfunge," a bunch of tobacco leaves which is sometimes three or four feet long by 4 to 6 inches thick. This bunch is exposed to the sun on the roof for one day. When the process of drying is finished, the leaves are put once more outside in the evening so as to get a little damp, and are then finally rolled up together. The bunch of tobacco is kept inside the house and often used for barter.

The *manioc* (ntjumbulu, mu-mi) is extensively cultivated both in the sand of the hills and near the marshes. The root, dried, and eaten either whole or ground, is very good food, but some plants have a bitter taste. But manioc can hardly be called a vegetable and borders on the domain of trees.

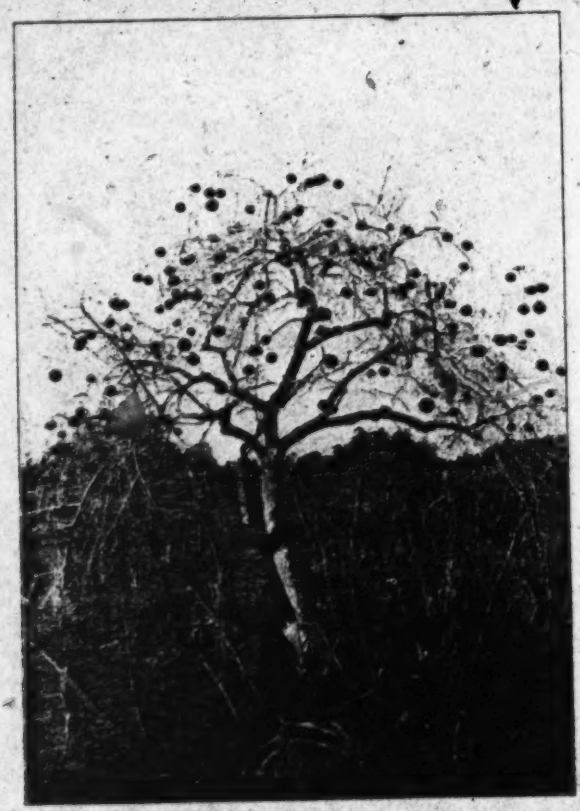
III. *Trees and fruits.*

Fruits play an important part in the diet of the Thongas, but wild fruits alone, the fruit with which Mother Earth presents them. They neither plant nor cultivate the trees ; when clearing the ground, they simply spare the fruit-bearing kinds which grow naturally. It may be that a man will sow some seeds of a particularly good *nkuhlu*, or *nkanye*, in his garden, if that garden happens to be devoid of trees ; this is all they do to improve the quality of the fruit. It is no wonder, after all, that tree cultivation is almost entirely absent in Thonga agriculture : villages move so frequently, owing to contamination by death, accusations of witchcraft, or exhaustion of the soil, that nobody takes the trouble to plant trees which he will not be able to carry away with him to his new residence.

As regards the indigenous fruits, they are varied and numerous. Natives systematically spare every fruit tree when clearing their

222 fields and, thanks to this wise precaution, the fructiferous growths have increased enormously ; and wherever the land is cultivated it presents the appearance of a huge orchard.

137 222 One of the best of the Native fruits is the *sala* (dji-ma), which



The nsala tree bearing the sala fruits. *Phot. A. Borel.*

takes a leading place in the diet of the Ba-Ronga ; it is a large shining, green ball, taking on a yellowish tint when ripening, and consists of a thin shell, easily broken, containing some twenty flat oval stones, covered with a yellowish coloured pulp, very sweet and delicate in flavour, but a little nauseating to the European taste. The sala is very invigorating and is a great and precious resource in times of shortage of crops.

Its first cousin, the *kwakwa* (dji-ma), is of the same shape and size, but, when ripening, becomes quite an orange yellow; it is never eaten uncooked. The pulp surrounding the stones is prepared in a certain way and made into strips (nhasa, yi-tin), which are hung on the trees to dry or over the fire to be smoked; this is what is called *nfuma*. Once the *nfuma* is dried, it can be pounded and made into a flour much valued when the storehouses are empty, and the new season has not yet begun. 222 252

The sala and the kwakwa are two species of the genus Strychnos (Strychnos spinosa and ungasha) which furnishes chemists and poisoners with the well-known drug strychnine. Does the-fruit contain any proportion of this substance? I do not know. It has never been known to kill any one, although it may be the cause of many intestinal troubles which naturally result when the Natives, having no more maize or sweet potatoes, live on nothing but this particular fruit. Strange to say, the kwakwa stones are credited with the power of attracting lightning; the old women say that, when making *nfuma*, these large white stones must never be allowed to lie in a heap in the open air: lightning would surely strike the village were any such imprudence committed. It is a taboo. 222 137 821

I have already described the *nkanye* (mu-mi), (Sclerocarya caffra, Kafir plum), which is certainly the most highly valued of all the trees in Thongaland (I. p. 398). The fruit is used primarily and essentially for the brewing of bukanye, by pressing the pulp, but the kernels of the stones of the nkanye are also much appreciated; they are very oleaginous and a modicum of oil may be obtained by merely squeezing them between the fingers! They are called *mongo*, and the saying is that they are food for kings, for the stones are very hard, the kernels very small and it is hard work to obtain even a small quantity! Not that there is any lack of stones! Heaps, which have been thrown away at the time of the famous bukanye brewing, are to be found in the vicinity of all villages, but the cracking is the difficulty. For this a stone must be sought, far and wide, and small hollows must be made in it of a size to fit the circular nkanye stones; these are then inserted in the sockets and cracked by a sharp skilful blow with another stone, 222 252

222 great care being taken to avoid crushing the small tender kernel,
252 the royal delicacy ! In times of famine the *mongo* is in great request, in spite of the trouble involved in obtaining it.

222 Another very valuable tree is the *nkuhlu* (mu-mi) (Trichilia
439 emetica I. p. 395) whose nuts are the *tihuhlu* (yin-tin) (1) the mafureira. This is a curious fruit, the nut itself being of a greenish black colour, bitter and very oily ; on this grows white pulp (bululu), covered with a beautiful skin of a bright orange, which, however, only covers about three quarters of the central black nut. The Natives pick this fruit in November and December, and stuff their cheeks with it ; the saliva softens the pulp, which melts gradually in the mouth, affording them a prolonged enjoyment of its exquisite flavour. One sees children, and also folks of mature age, with their cheeks puffed out as if they were badly swollen and throats contracted with the effort of sucking down the delicious pulp ; when nothing remains but the black nut which is called nkampfi, viz., the product of suction, it is carefully put aside and will be used for making vegetable fat ; or it will be sold to the Whites, who export them to Marseilles where, it appears, they are used for making really good oil. Let us hope these nuts, thus sucked clean by the Blacks, have never supplied any portion of our salad dressing ! But there is no occasion to be alarmed, as they are only used for making machine oil. The Blacks themselves do not use the tihuhlu oil for culinary purposes but for outward application only.

252 The *bululu* can also be made into an edible fat by the following
303 process : whole fruits of nkuhlu are first dried, then softened in water ; when quite soft, they are pressed between the fingers so as to separate the white pulp, which is then called *munyantsi*, from the black nuts (nkampfi). This munyantsi is cooked and the fat is skimmed off (wungula) with spoons as it melts and comes to the surface. This edible fat, as well as that used for smearing the body, is preserved either in calabashes or in sala shells (shikutja). The preparation of nkampfi fat takes place as

(1) A certain number of fruits instead of belonging to the dji-mu class, as is the rule, are incorporated with the yin-tin class, the tihuhlu, the tihlu (fruit of the muhlu tree), the tindjole (fruit of the ndjole), etc.

follows : the nuts are thoroughly dried (womisa), and slightly pounded in a mortar so as to remove the thin peel which covers them ; they are then winnowed, and ground into a kind of flour ; this flour is put into a pot with a little water and cooked ; the fat is then collected in a big shell of Achatina and kept for external use. The residue is called *bubindje*. 252 303

I do not mention all the other fruits, more or less succulent, which serve the Natives for food. One must be terribly famished to enjoy them. I may just specify the *pfilu* (dji-ma), Vangueria infausta, a kind of insipid medlar ; the *tjhopfa* (dji-ma), fruit of the *ntjhopfa* tree, which I could never muster courage enough to taste, and the *bunga* (dji-ma) sometimes dignified with the title of the Kafir orange. This latter is the fruit of one of the varieties of the india-rubber tree, which grows along the shores of Delagoa Bay. (Landolphia Kirkii.) In the Morakwen forest grow the ntjhole shrubs from which the *tintjole* berries are picked during the summer. 137 222

The *muhlu* or water tree bears a berry called *tihlu*, which has an agreeable taste. The *mphimbi* bears the *mahimbi*, a large round fruit similar in form to an apricot with a double stone. Both these fruits are used to prepare a drink, and we shall mention them when treating of Thonga drinks.

* * *

There are a few taboos to mention in connection with trees. 782

It is considered dangerous to cut the trunk of any large tree. Should you wish to make a mortar of a nkanye, first smear some of the bark with certain drugs and also burn them at the foot of the tree before cutting it down. Should you want to cut down a nkwenga or a mahogany-tree, nhlapfuta (Ro.), shene (Dj.), to make a canoe, the master of the forest must first offer a sacrifice to the spirits of his ancestors who have been buried there. If you omit this precaution, you will be unable to find again the tree you have chosen. 824

good luck ; he will say : "My god has blessed me and shown me this gandjelo," and he is quite welcome to help himself to the wine. On the other hand, it is prohibited to touch the shell and to drink from it. It is taboo. A stranger doing so would be addressed as follows : "Are you a bee, are you a butterfly to go and help yourself from a shikutja, which does not belong to you?" He would be tied up, arms and legs, and left to sleep in the open for the whole night. On leaving him they will taunt him, saying : "Go and drink from the shikutja." He may even be condemned to pay a fine, a goat, or a hoe. This palm wine has a very sweet and agreeable taste.

According to the Native idea, *honey* (bulombe) is also a drink! The prefix *bu* classifies this product amongst liquids. It is very much appreciated and Natives readily submit to be stung in order to collect it (hakula) from the holes in old trees or rocks. They generally burn some grass which they hold in one hand, keeping the bees away with the smoke and the flame, and gathering the honey combs into a pot with the other hand. Thongas frequently secure honey in an artificial way by placing a broken pot upside-down in the bush. Bees are attracted and a swarm will occasionally make its home in the pot. In the Ñwambukota region (near Morakwen) I saw a Ronga who even had bee hives of his own invention and succeeded in securing plenty of honey. Native honey is of a brownish, blackish hue. When eating it, Thongas do not at all despise the larvae : are they not meat?

3) *The Shiwayawaya and Shikokiyane drinks.* The various kinds of beer and drinks made from fruit were not, however, enough for the Thongas. They saw that White people used sugar-cane to distil rum and they attempted to do the same. The result of their attempt is called *Shiwayawaya*. Inhambane Natives seem to have been the first to brew it ; their kinsmen of the Lourenço Marques district soon followed their example. They crush the sugar-cane in a mortar, after having poured some water into it ; they then collect the crushed cane in a sack, press it, and extract all the liquid they can in one or two barrels. During the night a fire is lighted in a hut, near the barrels, to

224 they come to him," For this reason hunters strongly assert that should
775 he neglect to perform the rite he will have no success in his future
783 hunting expeditions. A third aim, at least in the case of hippopotamus-
825 hunting, is to overcome the charms of the wizards who ride upon them.

When studying these old hunting rites I had the impression of living for some hours in close contact with primitive humanity, at a time when man, owing to the elementary character of the weapons at his disposal, was almost on the same level as the wild beast and was obliged to display an enormous amount of courage, skill and endurance in order to assert his domination over the animal world and to make it serve his purposes. Since the discovery of gun powder and modern weapons a new era has set in for the hunter. Did not old Viguet assert that now, when an elephant is killed by means of a gun, the nuru is no longer to be feared? Hunting has become for the Bantu of to-day an amusing sport, more profitable indeed but by no means so interesting!

II. *Psinyama-nyamana. The flesh of small animals.*

136 This word, which comes from the well-known Bantu word
262 nyama, meat, is a triple diminutive, obtained by the reduplication of the stem, the prefix *psi*, and the suffix *ana*. It means all kinds of food derived from animals of small size, of which the Thongas are very fond.

Anything in any way resembling meat is welcome to them. Amongst Mammalia they specially enjoy certain kinds of rodents, not the domestic rats, but field mice called maphephe and mabuti which boys catch in their traps. Civet cats (nsimba, yi-tin) and wild cats (goya, dji-ma) are not frequently seen near the villages.

As regards birds, they eat them all with the few exceptions
222 which I shall shortly mention, from the tiniest sparrow to ducks
262 and Guinea fowls, which they manage to snare. They have no aversion to the lower types of animal : they collect the *matomane*, large caterpillars belonging to a species of Saturnidae called Cirina similis (Dist), which are found in families on the nkanye tree, during October. By the exercise of a gentle pressure on the hideous creatures, the inside is squeezed out, and the rest is thrown

into a saucepan and boiled, resulting in an indescribable broth of a blackish colour. To see it is quite sufficient... and they enjoy it! Several other kinds of Saturnidae also figure at their feasts : the matomane of nyamari (Bunaea Caffraria), others of a brick red colour (Melanocera Menippe), those of the nhlangula shrub (Gonimbrasia Zambezina), etc. When the cooks go out to split the trunks of old half decayed nkanye trees, from which they get their kindling wood, they are most careful to put on one side the big white larvae of two large Cerambycidae coleoptera (Mallodon Downesii and Plocoederus frenatus, etc.). These enormous white worms (shipungu) will be fried in their own fat, and served up as a tit-bit for the ladies on their return to the village.

The insect world does great injury to the gardens through the agency of its winged members, the *locusts*, and Natives avenge themselves by eating them wholesale. When a swarm of these destructive creatures has alighted somewhere in the evening, and is benumbed by the cool air of the night, the villagers go and collect them in bags or baskets in great quantities. The heads, wings and legs are torn off and the bodies roasted on the embers, or boiled and used as seasoning. When plentiful, the locusts are dried and crushed in mortars to make a much appreciated flour. To our taste, locusts are simply nauseating.

Another favourite dish, the secret of which the Nkunas learnt from their Pedi neighbours, is provided by *the winged imagos of white ants*. At Christmas time, these insects emerge by thousands from the ant-hills of that region. Some are of small size ; the boys introduce grasses, smeared with glue, into the holes from which they come and catch a large number of them by this kind of fishing. They eat the head, which can be heard cracking between their teeth, and throw the bodies into a calabash to season the evening meal. But there is a larger kind which is even more appreciated. The body is whitish, as large as an almond. A hole in the ant-hill, three feet wide by two feet deep, is dug at the spot where the insects are most likely to emerge. An old pot is placed in the clay of the ant-hill at the bottom of this hole. The hole itself is covered with green branches. These curious winged termites, as soon as they have emerged from their retreat,

136 try to fly ; but they soon fall to the ground and you see them
222 running towards each other and shedding their slender transparent
262 wings, so that they remain on the spot, like worms, creeping slowly along, unable to defend themselves, an easy prey for the birds and the *shinana* toads, which have a grand feast on the happy day when winged termites appear! Those which happen to emerge where the hole has been dug, try to escape by flying, but are prevented from doing so by the covering of leaves. They at once fall heavily to the bottom and roll into the pot, which may become quite full in a few hours. The owner of the trap then comes and makes a splendid sauce with its contents! This kind of termite is not met with on the Coast.

I cannot enter into details as to all these more or less questionable foods. (See I, p. 65, the mention of the Shitambela beetle.)

262 Although the caterpillars, coleoptera, larvae, and locusts are universally appreciated, there are other "meats" which appeal to certain individuals or clans, but are disdainfully eschewed by others. For instance the boa is eaten with great gusto by the Rongas and disliked by the Nkunas. The same is true of the big varan lizard. The tortoise is generally eaten, but the Mpfumu boys, who esteem themselves more civilised, reject it. On inquiring why some persons or clans exclude certain kinds of meats which other persons or clans consider delectable, we find that there are two different reasons for this, between which it is important to differentiate. The exclusion is due either to a *nyenya*, viz., disgust, or to a *yila*, viz., a taboo.

1) Owing to *disgust*, some people refuse to eat *pork* : "their hearts fear it," probably because pigs are modern and some people are not yet accustomed to eat their flesh. Zulus reject every
262 kind of fish (nhlampfi) from the same feeling of disgust. Snails
777 are despised by all the Thongas ; it is true that the snail of the
826 country (Natica Wesseliana) is not very tempting, its shell being of a transparent green and its flesh reddish ; moreover it is said to "singita," viz., to bring bad luck to any one meeting with it on the way.

262 But the flesh of some other animals is abstained from, even
826 dreaded, because they *yila*, they are taboo. Thongas have no

585 When they accompany the bride to her new home, they sing :

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539
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U ya kwi, Mamano ! — Whither goest thou, mother ?
U ya kwi shana ? — Whither goest thou ?
Ba ta tshaha shihundju ni lihlelo, mamano !
They will bring thee the basket full of maize and the fan, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u tlokoli, ba tlokolisa, mamano !
When thou hast finished crushing it, they will make thee crush it again, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u kopoli, ba kopolisa, mamano !
When thou hast plastered the floor, they will make thee plaster it again, my mother !

But when they come on a visit, carrying jars of beer as presents to the newly married couple, they are much less guarded in their language, ridiculing the poor husband and his family, and making fun of every one in general. They begin singing on the way, with the jars on their heads :

He ntshonga, banhwanyana, he nga batjanana
He la libango ; fa hi nga labi, we manyana.
Ku laba manyana ka ñwan'a manyana.
We are a small band, young girls ; there are few of us.
We are looking for a piece of meat on the spit ; formerly we should not have known where to find any, our sister (so and so) !
Now our sister will get some for us from her husband !

Hi kokobisa lobe, hi ya kwihi shana ?
Hi bhanu ba ku yalwa !
He fambaka ni khombo, ni khombo dji le kaya !
Where are we going, thus dragging the hook behind us ? (1)
We are the people that are hated.
We walk in misfortune (2), the misfortune that has befallen our house !

Ka ku kandja ñwana a ku na kule.
Wo khunga he lihanyi, we koko !
Ya kokowela : kowe-kowe-kowe.
Where a daughter lives it cannot be very far off.
Go there, grannie, limping and leaning on thy staff !
Listen to the hen cackling. She says : kowe, kowe, kowe. (3)

[222] (1) They compare themselves to women who have been in the fields, picking kwakwa fruits (p. 17), and are so heavily laden that they cannot carry the hook used for pulling the fruit off the trees ; they have had to tie it to their belt, and drag it behind them on their way home. The travellers give it to be understood that they are not out for pleasure !

(2) That of having to go and see a brother-in-law who ill-treats their sister.

(3) This line is an encouragement to the old woman who finds the walk long and tiring. The other women promise her a fowl at the end of their journey, which the son-in-law will kill for her. Note the first line of the third verse : it is a kind of proverb.